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AGAM-P (M) (15 Sep 67) FOR OT RD-670273

20 September 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report - Lessons Learned, Headquarters, 13th
 Combat Aviation (Delta) Battalion

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Kenneth G. Wickham

KENNETH G. WICKHAM
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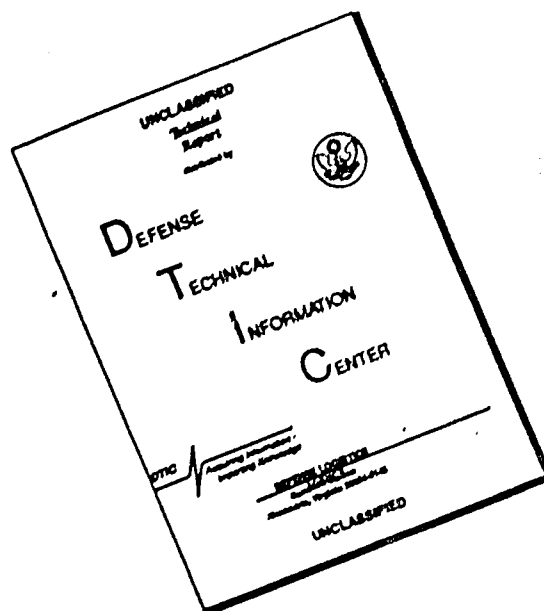
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS, 13TH COMBAT AVIATION (DELTA) BATTALION
APO San Francisco 96215

AVBA-DB-3

15 May 1967

SUBJECT: Operational Report on Lessons Learned Period Ending 30 April
1967 (RCS CSFOR 67)

SECTION I

Significant Organization or Unit Activities

A. Organization: During the reporting period, the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion included:

1(U).Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment with the 52nd and 24th Quartermaster and the Headquarters Section of the Security Platoon.

2(U).The 345th Airfield Detachment(Operations), with the 52d Quartermaster Detachment and 1st Section of the Security Platoon attached.

3(U).The 347th Airfield Detachment (Operations) with the 53d Quartermaster Detachment, Section I, 69th Infantry Detachment (Ground Surveillance Radar), the 41st Medical Detachment (C.A.), the 78th Artillery Detachment (Counter-Mortar Radar), and the 2d section of the Security Platoon attached.

4(U).The 346th Airfield Detachment (Operation) with the 5th Quartermaster Detachment, Section 2, 69th Infantry Detachment (Ground Surveillance Radar), the 83d Medical Detachment (C. A.) and the 3d section of the Security Platoon attached.

5(U).The 336th Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) with the 167th Transportation Detachment (Aircraft Maintenance), and the 277th Signal Detachment (Avionics) attached.

6(U).The 121st Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) with the 80th Transportation Detachment (Aircraft Maintenance) and the 257th Signal Detachment (Avionics) attached.

7(U).The 114th Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) with the 544th Transportation Detachment (Aircraft Maintenance), and the 96th Signal Detachment (Avionics) attached.

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8(U). The 175th Assault Helicopter Company (UH1) with the 150th Transportation Detachment (Aircraft Maintenance) and the 28th Signal Detachment (Avionics) attached.

9(U). The 221st Reconnaissance Airplane Company (O-1) with the 325th Signal Detachment (Avionics) attached.

B. Significant Changes: General Order 799, Headquarters, 1st Aviation Brigade, dated 7 March 1967, assigned the 345th, 346th and 347th Airfield Detachments (Operation) to this Headquarters effective 21 February 1967. The Detachments assumed control of the battalion airfields at Vinh Long, Soc Trang, and Can Tho. This action relieved the assigned tactical units of all support requirements at each installation leaving them free to devote their entire efforts towards their combat missions. All supporting units and detachments assigned for house-keeping, installation support requirements, and security were assigned to the Airfield Detachments (Operation). On 1 April 1967 a highly portable military affiliate radio system (MARS) station was put into operation for the Mekong Delta Region by the Battalion Communications Section. This portable system consists of one Collins KWM-2 radio, one Collins 30 linear amplifier and a locally constructed antenna. The package weighs approximately 75 lbs, is carried in suitcases and can be set up at a field location by one individual in about one hour. The portable station operates as a sub-station of the main station (ABSAN) assigned to the battalion and enables this unit to provide service to an additional 1000 American servicemen located in isolated outposts throughout the IV Corps Tactical Zone. On 26 March 67 Colonel Jack T. Dempsey, Commanding Officer, 13th Combat Aviation Battalion, was killed in action while attempting a rescue of two aircraft crews who had been shot down (Operation Long Phi 9990 para 4(2)). LTC William H. Harper assumed command. On April 10, issue of eight UH1-C helicopters to the 175th Assault Helicopter Company began replacing their UH1-B armed helicopters. Six XM-21 armament subsystems (mini-guns) were concurrently issued. The aircraft were prepared for missions, armament installed by the gaining unit and the aviators transitioned by 18 April.

D. Operational and Administrative Aviation Support:

1(U). The 13th Combat Aviation Battalion assigned and attached units continued to provide operational and administrative support to the ARVN, IV Corps, the IV Corps MACV Advisory Force, Special Forces and USAID. These missions included Command Liaison, outpost resupply, medical evacuation, radio relay, aerial escort and visual surveillance. Statistics generated in support of all assigned missions are listed below:

	FEB	MAR	APR	TOTAL
HRS FLOWN	12,670	15,268	14,135	42,073
SORTIES	21,594	27,402	26,994	75,990

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PAX MOVED	39,890	65,572	67,990	173,452
CARGO TONS MOVED	994	553	860	2,407

D. Tactical Aviation Support:

Tactical Army Aviation Support was given to ARVN IV Corps, its subordinate units, and Special Forces. Reinforcement of II FFV Aviation elements was given for Junction City Phase I and the U.S. 9th Infantry Division's sweep Southeast of Saigon. Specific support during this period included air landed assaults, aerial direct fire support, eagle flights, reconnaissance and surveillance of the battle area, leaflet dissemination, armed aerial escort, aeromedical evacuation, canal curfew enforcement (Firefly) and aerial dispensation of riot control agents and smoke. Statistics generated in support of these missions are listed below:

	FEB	MAR	APR	TOTAL
HELIBORNE ASSAULT MISSIONS	17	31	27	75
HRS FLOWN	5,385.4	6,183.2	5,935.5	17,444.1
SORTIES	7136	11,019	11,656	23,338
TROOPS MOVED	22,342	45,245	43,590	111,177
FIRELY MSNS	52	64	47	163
VC-KBAA	401	626	517	1,544
VC SAMPANS DESTROYED	210	572	307	1,089
VC STRUCTURES DESTROYED	224	510	286	1,020

E. Significant Operations Conducted During This Period:

1(U). Cuu Long 55, Kien Hoa, 20 - 27 February 67: On 20 February 1967, Delta Battalion staged at Go Cong to support the ARVN 7th Division Search and Destroy operation in Northeastern Kien Hoa. Maneuvering Forces consisted of the 10th Regiment, the 11th Regiment and two Binh Dai RF companies supported by the 21st and 27th RAG. The mission objective was to enter, search and destroy a known enemy logistical base area seldom penetrated by GVN Forces. The operation ran a total of eight days. With 43 aircraft in support, a total of 1,430 troops were lifted into the operational area on the first day. These lifts commenced at 0807 and were completed by 1300 hours utilizing 26 armed transports. Three armed platoons

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supported this day's activities by providing armed escort, direct fire support and reconnaissance of the battle area. Armed platoon claims were 16 VC KBAA, ten structures and two sampans destroyed. The second day of the operation was supported by 23 aircraft to include ten armed transports and two armed platoons. Two lifts totaling 100 troops were made to position a reconnaissance company. There was light VC resistance this day. All other units continued their search and destroy missions. CH-47's and armed transports were utilized for resupply and extraction of captured materials. (Chinook helicopters were utilized to introduce troops by ladder into inaccessible areas and to extract captured material from these areas. This was a "first" for the ARVN 7th Division. Armed helicopters reported negative results this day. On 22 February 1967, Delta Battalion continued its support with 23 aircraft. Ground units continued their search missions in assigned areas. Most of this day activities was devoted to the extraction of captured material. Armed platoons claimed five VC KBAA, seven WBAA, four sampans and two structures destroyed. A Red Haze mission was flown late in the evening which located two VC troop concentrations. At 0100 on 23 February 1967, Delta Battalion began early support by providing a Firefly element to fire on VC concentrations discovered by Red Haze. This mission resulted in one secondary explosion and the destruction of two buildings. 20 aircraft were additionally committed in support of this day's operation. The primary mission of aviation was the extraction of large quantities of captured material ... Armed platoons claimed eight VC KBAA. On 24 February, with 24 aircraft, Delta Battalion continued its support of the 7th Division. An RF Company was repositioned and the majority of the day was spent in resupply and extraction of captured materials. 190 troops were lifted into the operational area and 293 troops were extracted. Armed helicopters reported negative results this day. 25 February saw a continuation of the search operation supported with 19 Delta Battalion aircraft. Resupply and extraction of captured materials consumed the major portion of aviation's efforts this day. One 100 man lift was flown to reposition troops. Armed platoons claimed ten VC KBAA while conducting reconnaissance of the battle area. 26 February was the last day of aviation support for this operation. Staging from Ban Tre and Go Cong with 55 aircraft, extraction of the ground units commenced at 0800 hours. By 1335 hours 1050 troops had been returned to their home station. Total results of this operation were as follows: 60 VC KIA, 40 WIA, 61 VCC. Equipment captured: 8-75mm pack howitzers, 4-60mm mortars, 1 anti-aircraft machinegun, 334 individual weapons, 40 tons of assorted ammo and explosives, 50 kilos of documents, 1 radio, 1 vise, 2 sewing machines, 30 kilos of printing type, 1 paper cutter, 1 motor for a printing press, 2 sampan motors, 1 outboard motor. Supplies and equipment destroyed: 8 barges, 1 ammo storage dump, 2 ammo factories, 1 training center, 2 information booths, 1 dispensary, 1 typewriter, 1 outboard motor, 2 tons of rice, and numerous structures. The seven days duration together with aggressive day and night operations and maximum use of Army aviation, artillery, naval gunfire and TAC support all combined to keep the enemy off balance and produce a highly successful operation.

✓ 2(G) Long Phi 999/G. Vinh Binh. Tam Binh District: 26 -27 March 1967.

Operation Long Phi 999/G was initiated at 0600 hours 26 March 67, as an immediate reaction force mission in an attempt to trap Viet Cong

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forces which had mortared and attacked ARVN units in Tam Binh District Town (XS099105). Initial aviation employment called for the use of twelve transports, two armed platoons and two Command and Control aircraft. The Commanding Officer, 175th Aviation Company, was designated Mission Commander.

The initial concept of the operation was to air-land two battalions, the 3/16 and the 1/14 ARVN Infantry, in landing zones Alpha (XS188111) and Bravo eastward from Tam Binh in an attempt to contact the Viet Cong departing the Tam Binh area. It was also planned that a cavalry troop, using armored personnel carriers would swing eastward from Tam Binh.

The Command and Control aircraft (C&C) with the Air and Ground Mission Commanders on board arrived in the operational area at 0815 hrs in time to witness a B-57 strike in the vicinity of Objective Two. Following the strike, it was determined by the ground commander that he desired to move LZ Alpha approximately 1800 meters west of its original location (VIC XS 166109) and that a third LZ might be used. Due to the change in scheduled LZ's, the C&C aircraft marked the new Alpha and the proposed LZ vic A 23 with smoke for one armed platoon which had arrived on station at 0825. At this time, no movement or activity was observed in either area. After a reconnaissance by the Armed Platoon, the transports, which had departed Vinh Long at 0834, were brought in off RP-1 with instructions to land in Vee of 5's to the East, and depart the LZ in a left turn to the North. Further, the transports were to be screened on the south side during touchdown by a smoke generator equipped helicopter.

As the transports were touching down in the LZ (0850 hours) and the smoke ship was making its run, reports of heavy automatic weapons fire were received from all the transports. The smoke ship received six rounds which disabled its screening equipment. All transports immediately attempted to depart from the LZ. One ship was disabled and remained in the LZ. The volume of fire was such that the Mission Commander ordered that no attempt be made by any of the departing transports to pick-up the downed crew. With Armed Helicopter cover, a medical evacuation helicopter (Dustoff) was brought into the vicinity of the downed aircraft to pick up the crew. Continuous fire was placed on the suspected enemy locations by the armed helicopters during the attempted med-evac. Dustoff succeeded in loading three of the crew members on board and, as a take off to the North was initiated, the engine section was observed to catch fire. The aircraft hit the ground rolled to the right and burned. Crew and passengers were seen evacuating the aircraft, but it was unable to determine the exact number. At this time, a call was made for all available armed helicopters and TAC Air to support the operation. The second armed platoon was scrambled to the operational area. A second lift was put in approximately 1,000 meters North of the first LZ. The Commanding Officer of the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion Colonel Jack T. Dempsey, determined that the crews could

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be evacuated safely and after artillery preparation of obj Two, and an air strike in the area was in progress, attempted to rescue the downed crews. Again, an armed platoon was used to cover his attempt. On landing, a call was made by one of the crew members that the Commanding Officer was hit and the aircraft was observed to touch down and commence to burn. The situation at this time was (0930 hours approximately):

- a. 3 helicopters down in the landing zone area.
- b. Friendly forces in the first LZ had withdrawn 100 meters North of the downed helicopters due to the intensity of enemy fire.
- c. Reinforcing troops from the 2d LZ were unable to move south and join the first element.
- d. No reliable radio contact could be made with troops in the 1st LZ. (It was later learned that the Advisor with the unit had been killed shortly after landing).
- e. Continuous air strikes were being placed in the objective two area.
- f. Two additional battalions, the 2/16 and the 43rd Rangers (ARVN) were to be committed.
- g. The 114th Aviation Company with 2 armed platoons and the 116th Aviation Company with 1 armed platoon were committed to support the operation.
- h. All available personnel at Vinh Long Airfield, the staging area, had been called to the fight line to assist in refueling and rearming the ships. Their efforts succeeded in reducing the gun ship turn around time from 20-25 minutes to 7-10 minutes.
- i. The operation continued with the remaining two battalions being transported to an LZ West of Alpha (VIC XS 162117). Light and sporadic small arms fire was received during these lifts. They continued until approximately 1600 hours when all four battalions were completely deployed in the area.
- j. At approximately 1400 hours, after it became known that the personnel carrier unit would not be able to enter the area due to unfordable canals, and that the friendly troops North of the downed aircraft could not advance to the aircraft and beyond them into the treeline (Obj two), a third attempt was initiated to rescue the downed crews. Two armed platoons were formed in tactical trail, a Smoke Ship and Dustoff were alerted and the extraction began. The concept was as follows: The armed helicopters would circle to the right with at least one helicopter always firing on the enemy positions on the North side of Objective two. A

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simultaneous Tac strike was put in the tree lines along the canal through objective two. The Smoke Ship followed by Dustoff, would approach from East to West under the armed ships and screen between the downed aircraft and the Viet Cong. The problem of screening was compounded by a relatively strong wind blowing from the Southeast which caused the smoke to drift rapidly to the Northwest and expose the wrecked aircraft and crews to Viet Cong observation and fire. The action was initiated and successfully completed. To evacuate all US and ARVN wounded required Dustoff plus 3 transports to land in the exposed area. The smoke ship made seven passes over the Viet Cong positions in order to keep an effective screen in the area. As the armed helicopters expended their ordnance in the target area, individual aircraft would break out of the formation and be replaced by aircraft from a third armed platoon. The entire operation required approximately 10 minutes, during which time four aircraft loads of wounded were evacuated and the Senior Advisor to the 16th Regiment was placed on the ground with his troops. At the completion of the evacuation, only 3 of the 12 downed air crew members were not accounted for.

k. The remainder of the day was spent in completion of troop lifts into the area and providing fire support to ground units.

l. At approximately 0030 hours on 27 March 1967, a report was received that one of the missing crew members had been located, wounded, in the area. He was successfully evacuated through the joint efforts of an armed platoon and the crew of Green Delta 777 (the IV Corps Commander's aircraft).

m. During the morning of 27 March 67, a mortuary team was flown into the area by LTC W. H. HARPER, the new battalion commander to recover and identify the bodies of the two remaining crew members. Evacuation of the one crashed helicopter which had not burned was accomplished, and the remnants of the other two were destroyed in place by a demolition team. During the afternoon, all four battalions were successfully extracted from the area. Only occasional single rounds of enemy fire were received, none of which came from the immediate vicinity of the pick-up zones.

n. The operation was successfully completed at approximately 1800 hours, 27 March 1967 with all units being returned to their home stations.

VIET CONG LOSSES

PERSONNEL

A. VC KIA	142
B. VC Captured	4

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VC Carried Off (Estimated) 100

EQUIPMENT CAPTURED

MG Cal .30	2 ea
MG Cal .50	2 ea
M-40 Rocket Launcher	2 ea
BAR	6 ea
K-50 SMG	3 ea
Carbines Cal .30	7 ea
Rifle (Soviet)	5 ea
Rifle (M-1)	4 ea
Pistol	7 ea
Radio (PRC-10)	1 ea
Sight (60mm Mortar)	1 ea
Generator	1 ea
Telephone (Field)	2 ea
Mine (Anti-Tank)	5 ea
Ammunition (Assorted)	5000 Rounds
Shovels	10 ea
Canteens	1 ea
Helmets	10 ea
Ammunition (MG)	5 Boxes
Wire (Field)	5000 meters
Ammunition (Rocket Launcher)	10 Rounds
Radio Receiver (USAID)	1 ea
Switchboard (Telephone)	2 ea

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Binoculars	1 ea
Marine Engine	1 ea
Gas Mask	1 ea
Assorted Packs, Cartridge Belts, etc...	

3(U) Dan Chi 279, Chuong Thien, 14-16 February 1967:

Staging from Vi Thanh at 0700 hours, the 13th Combat Aviation Battalion supported the 21st ARVN Division with 55 aircraft. The Division mission was to search the operating zone of the D-2 VC. Regiment in order to close with and destroy the regiment or its subordinate units; the 303rd and 310th Main Force Battalions. This Regiment operates primarily in the Chuong Thien Province, harassing and attacking outposts and district headquarters. The operation was conducted with maneuvering forces consisting of three Infantry battalions, one Cavalry Troop and two Regional force companies during the initial phase. Aviation resources included three platoons of Armed helicopters, 41 Armed transports, two C&C's and two Medical Evacuation helicopters.

There was negative contact during the initial phases of the operation, however gunships received sporadic small arms fire throughout the morning. At 1220 a Ranger Battalion was airlifted into the operational area. Light automatic weapons and mortar fire were encountered during the assault. When contact was made with the enemy, five armed helicopters were recalled from other operational areas to support the operation. Helicopters accounted for 70 VC KBAA, 15 VC WBAA, eight structures and 21 sampans destroyed. Two thousand and five (2005) troops were airlifted into the operational area and 797 were extracted. At 2130 hrs, 15 Feb 67 a "Firefly" mission was requested by the 21st Division. One light helicopter and two armed helicopters were dispatched to the area. The aircraft provided fire support and armed reconnaissance throughout the area with two structures destroyed. At 0835 elements of the 21st Division were airlifted into the operational area using 62 aircraft which included two C&C's, 35 Armed transports, 14 Armed helicopters, one maintenance, and two Medical evacuation helicopters. At 0940 hrs the ground elements reported light contact with mortar and automatic weapons fire. At 1105 hrs, the 82nd Med Det was scrambled to support the operation because of heavy casualties. Two elements were lifted to the area of the 42nd Ranger Battalion to reinforce the Rangers so the attack could be pressed. On touch down in the landing zone, the lift came under automatic weapons and 60mm mortar fire. The second lift was then moved to a landing zone further to the East into an open field. As this lift landed it came under heavy automatic weapons and rocket launcher fire. Two helicopters were shot down immediately. Two more were able to take off but were forced down by battle damage several kilometers to the Southeast. At this time it was determined that the Rangers were completely surrounded in the heavy woodline. Armed helicopters were employed and accounted for 87 VC KBAA, four structures destroyed, and 6 sampans destroyed. During the operation seven lifts totaling 1,925 troops

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and six extractions totaling 1,650 troops were made in support of the operation. Three major assaults were made during the day, each receiving heavy automatic weapons, mortar and rocket launcher fire. Medical evacuation and recovery of downed aircraft was accomplished prior to darkness, although heavy fire was received during all operations. During the hours of darkness Firefly found 50 sampans moving illegally in the area and inflicted heavy damage to forces on the move. On 16 Feb, Delta Battalion supported with 44 aircraft to include 23 Armed transports, 2 C&C, 2 Med Evac. and 17 Armed helicopters. In repositioning ground troops this day, 1213 were carried by the Armed transports. There were 1903 troops extracted during the day's operation. Ground troops claimed, ten VCC, and three mines captured. Armed helicopters claimed 42 VC KBAA, 16 WBAA, 43 structures and 18 sampans destroyed. All maneuvering forces were extracted this day.

E. Tactics: Viet Cong activity has remained constant throughout the Delta during the period averaging 450VC - initiated incidents monthly. This represents an unprecedented low in VC activity as compared with April 1966 when activity rose to more than 850 incidents. Viet Cong anti-aircraft methods seemed to become more effective during the period, however this cannot be proved at the present time due to the an inadequate data base. Viet Cong supply lines have been a chief target during the period. The discovery of many large arms and supply caches, when combined with battle field successes and a 300 per cent increase in Hoi Chanh returnees, accounts for the corresponding drop in Viet Cong activity. Viet Cong defensive measures characterized by prolonged contact and delay actions; followed by withdrawal from contact, are still being employed effectively. Concrete bunkers have been noted on several occasions and are reportedly the remnants of Japanese defenses which have been reopened and improved. These were noted in Vinh Binh Province and Chuong Thien Province in the vicinity of Twin Rivers (Dan Chi 279), Sampan traffic has increased with the rice harvest and the increase is occurring in the Twin Rivers, Chuong Thien, Phong Dinh Province. Since this is the first documentation of the sampan traffic and its increase, there is no comparison analysis possible. During the reporting period the 13th Combat Aviation Spot System doubled its intelligence reports to IV Corps. This is primarily due to the stress placed on intelligence reporting by company commanders of assault helicopter companies. An incentive was introduced in the form of an intelligence award given monthly to the high reporting unit in the Battalion. During February, there were 175 enemy sightings resulting in 115 reactions. In March there were 236 sightings and 170 (approximate) reactions by IV Corps assets. In April, approximately 200 spot reports with 120 reactions were recorded. Most notable was the discovery of six fully loaded, ocean going junks at anchor in a VC base area in Kien Hoa Province. These were reported immediately by the sector "Shotgun" pilot. A fighter strike was mounted against the target. Three junks were sunk, another was slowly sinking and all unloaded cargo on the banks was destroyed. As of this report, the spot reporting system has been in effect 10 months with more than 2200 reports submitted. While there is no way of determining exactly how many positive sightings have been acted

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upon; recent experience indicates approximately one-half are struck by various assets available to IV corps. All reports are recorded and analyzed as base data for Order of Battle. All fortifications are posted permanently to the Target Books of the Delta Battalion. Delta Battalion Target Books are now being used to provide psychological warfare targets for the 19th Psy Ops Company. Enemy dispositions, level of activity, length of time away from home areas and other factors have proven accurate indicators of VC morale, intentions and objectives.

G. Logistics: Expenditures of ammunition and POL during the period are as follows.

	FEB	MAR	APR	TOTAL
7.62mm (LKD)	1,151,680	2,653,745	1,892,437	5,697,862
2.75" Rockets	5,950	12,277	8,233	26,460
40mm Generades (LKD)	5,842	8,349	8,037	22,228
JP/4 (Gals)	1,226,700	1,691,093	1,204,900	4,162,693
AVGAS (Gals)	292,300	271,528	227,000	790,828

Now that all units in the battalion are subsisting in field Ration Messes, there is a continuing problem of resupply of Class I rations to the various mess halls. The high temperatures experienced in Vietnam and the fact that rations are issued from Saigon, necessitates they be transported by USAF aircraft. A high spoilage factor now exists due to non-availability of aircraft. Some units experience 10 to 12 days with no delivery of rations. 1st Log Command has been advised of this delivery problem and they have attempted to have special missions assigned for the delivery of rations. This has alleviated the delivery problem somewhat but there is still improvement to be accomplished in this area. The establishment of a Class I ration breakdown point at Can Tho will alleviate most of the distribution problems to units of this battalion. 1st Log Command is presently staffing a plan to establish a Class I ration breakdown point at Can Tho and it should be complete during the next quarters. The airfield at Vinh Long has been declared unsafe for use by the USAF for CV7, C-123 and C-130 aircraft. The condition of the runway is such that large rocks are working their way from the subsurface to the surface of the runway. The rocks are endangering the safe operation of Fixed Wing aircraft. The closing of the runway has created a resupply problem for Vinh Long. The battalion has attempted to solve this problem by flying in supplies to Can Tho and Binh Thuy and then transshipping by vehicle and organic helicopters to Vinh Long. Repair of the Vinh Long runway will require a major engineering effort to completely renovate the runway. Work on the runway is due to commence in early May by an Engineer Construction Company.

H. Training:

1(U) Transition training continues for VNAF Aviators by Delta

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Battalion units. One class of eight aviators commenced training on 18 Feb and will complete on 13 May 1967.

b. A battalion instrument training regulation was published on 1 March implementing a meaningful instrument training program designed to maintain aviator instrument proficiency. Each aviator must, as a minimum, maintain a Tactical Instrument Certificate.

SECTION II PART I

A. OBSERVATION (Lessons Learned)

1 (U) ITEM: Significant Changes in the location of enemy positions.

a. DISCUSSION: In the past, enemy bunkers and other defensive positions in the Mekong Delta have been located primarily in the edge of tree lines. Thus affording them relatively easy concealment, and unrestricted fields of fire. Recently deviations from this procedure have been encountered. In selecting automatic weapons positions and the emplacement of bunkers, the enemy has moved approximately 150-200 meters from tree lines along dikes, outward from major canal lines, along smaller branch canals. This gives the VC the capability of covering probable helicopter landing zones with interlocking automatic weapons fire.

b. OBSERVATION: A thorough reconnaissance should be made by armed platoons to determine if proposed landing zones could possibly be surrounded by this type VC fortifications. Preparatory and suppressive fires should be directed along the small canal lines running perpendicular to the major canals which are usually objectives for the ground forces.

2 (U) ITEM: Destruction of enemy bunkers.

a. DISCUSSION: After friendly troops pass through an area, gunships continue to receive fire from bunkers.

b. OBSERVATION: All bunkers should be destroyed or damaged so as to deny the enemy use of the same bunkers in the future. Demolition crews should accompany troops on search and destroy operations.

3 (U) ITEM: The ambushing of aircraft during extractions.

a. DISCUSSION: Gunships have received fire from areas adjacent to friendly troops during their movement. As friendly troops line up for extractions the enemy moves in to surround the pick up zone. They wait until the extraction has started and then heavy fire is received by the transports and gunships. The friendly troops in the pick up zone often times receive fire, however, they do not return fire at the enemy positions.

b. OBSERVATION: As the aircraft start to receive fire, extraction of troops should be halted until the friendly troops silence the enemy fire. If necessary the troops already extracted should be put back on the ground to reinforce and/or flank the enemy position.

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4(U) ITEM: Use of the Airborne Integral Smoke Generator.

a. DISCUSSION: Due to the functional characteristics of the smoke generator, the aircraft must be employed tactically in the same role as an armed helicopter. Actual operations have shown that the aircraft carrying the smoke generator, when employed, has a much greater exposure factor than an armed helicopter.

b. OBSERVATION:

(1) A minimum of two (2) Integral Smoke Generators should be allotted to each assault helicopter company to obtain the optimum smoke screen on the target for the maximum duration.

(2) If employed under high wind conditions (15-20 KTS) it may be necessary to use naval smoke pots to supplement smoke screen. One smoke pot should be ejected every 3 seconds along the target line, with aircraft speed 65-75 knots, altitude 50 feet.

5 (U) ITEM: Main Rotor Hubs Leaking.

a. DISCUSSION: This unit experienced many problems with head leakage due to sand and dirt imbedded in the out board grip seals, thus causing many costly main rotor head changes.

b. OBSERVATION: To reduce this problem our component rebuild personnel established a program to periodically service these heads by draining and flushing with new oil and by using a small amount of air pressure at the grip reservoir to force the dirt and grit from under the seal.

6 (U) ITEM: Aircraft armament:

a. DISCUSSION: The following three discrepancies were noted in the initial installation and employment of the XM 21 subsystem:

(1) The power supply cable to the cross over cartridge was found to be installed in reverse. This prevents the cartridge drive from operating and cause link breakage in the chutting between the cross over and the delinking feeder.

(2) A quick disconnect coupling, not readily apparent in the gun system's wiring schematic, is located in the radio pedestal compartment between the pilot seats. This coupling was not connected on any of the "C" model aircraft delivered to this unit. It must be connected in order to provide power from the control head to the rocket pods.

b. OBSERVATION: Factory quality control could prevent such

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malfunctions. Also a note should be included on the schematic indicating this coupling is to be connected when arming with XM-21 subsystems.

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SECTION II PART II

A. Recommendation: Recommend that helicopters equipped with the integral smoke generator be designated a special purpose aircraft. Further that this aircraft be modified with armored plating to protect the crew and vital areas reducing vulnerability to small arms and automatic weapons fire. This modification can be accomplished at unit level by removing all but the center fuel cell to reduce weight. Additional fuel range for this type of mission is not needed in the Delta.


WILLIAM H. HARPER
LTC, Inf
Commanding

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AVBA-C (15 May 67) 1st Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned Period Ending 30th April,
1967 (RCS-CSPOR 67)

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST AVIATION BRIGADE, APO 96307

THRU: Commanding General, United States Army Vietnam, ATTN: AVHGC-DH,
APO 96307
Commander in Chief, United States Army Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-MH,
APO 96558

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff Force Development, Department of the
Army (ACSFOR DA), Washington D.C. 20310

1. (U) This headquarters has reviewed subject report of the 13th
Combat Aviation Battalion and considers it to be adequate and concurs
with the contents.

2. (FOUO) The following additional comments are considered pertinent:

a. Reference Section I, Paragraph G. The mess halls at Soc Trang, Vinh Long, and Can Tho were visited by the Deputy Commanding General of 1st Logistical Command, Subsistence Officer of 1st Logistical Command, Commanding Officer 506th Support Command, Subsistence Officer 506th Support Command, on 17 and 18 May 1967. The plan of establishing special mission flights has proven to be unsatisfactory. It is also programmed for all unit mess halls to be given additional refrigerated storage space within the next two weeks; once this is completed units will be issued up to 15 days extra rations to cover short falls in delivery schedule. The establishment of a Class I Ration Breakdown Point at Can Tho will certainly improve the ration distribution situation, however, units will still be dependent upon the Air Force for delivery because units only have tactical aircraft. All units have Class A Rations on hand at the present time, and delivery schedules are being monitored very closely by Saigon Support Command and 1st Logistical Command.

(1) Repairs on Vinh Long runway were started 1 May. Completion of repairs is being delayed by lack of sand preparing of subgrade.

b. Reference Section II, Part I A 4. Present plans call for a minimum of two (2) Integral Smoke Generators to be assigned to each assault helicopter company.

c. Reference Section II, Part I A 5. 34th Group Maintenance Officer approves of the described procedure to remove dirt and grit from under the grip seals.

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AVBA-C

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned Period Ending 30th April
1967 (RCS-CSFOR 67) (Cont'd)

d. Reference Section II Part I A 6. The WECOM technical representative to 34th GS Group and the 34th Group Armament Officer have been made aware of the discrepancies noted in the initial installation of the XM-21 subsystem, as well as the recommendations for improved quality control.

e. Reference Section II Part II. The use of the UH-1D rather than the UH-1C as a smoke generator was in order to preclude its being made a special mission aircraft. It is believed that insufficient flying time would be generated solely on smoke missions to justify the designation of a smoke ship as a "Special Mission" aircraft.

FOR THE COMMANDER:



J. M. GREETHAM
Captain, AGC
Asst Adjutant General

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AVHGC-DST (15 May 67) 2d Ind
SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
30 April 1967 (HCS CSFOR-65) (U)

HEADQUARTERS, UNITED STATES ARMY VIETNAM, APO San Francisco 96307 20 JUN 1967

TO: Commander in Chief, United States Army, Pacific, ATTN: GPOP-OT,
APO 96558


1. This headquarters has reviewed the Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the period ending 30 April 1967 from Headquarters, 13th Combat Aviation (Delta) Battalion as indorsed.

2. Pertinent comments follow:

a. Reference items concerning lessons learned, paragraphs 1, 2 and 3, page 12: This information will be disseminated world wide in Battlefield Reports-A Summary of Lessons Learned, Volume 4.

b. Reference item concerning class I problem, paragraph G, page 11: Saigon Support Command will provide increased refrigerated storage capacities to unit mess halls. This action is anticipated to be completed by 30 June 1967.

FOR THE COMMANDER:


E. L. KENNEDY
CPT, ACC
Asst Adjutant General

PROTECTIVE MARKINGS MAY BE
CANCELED WHEN SEPARATED
FROM PROTECTED MATERIAL

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GPOP-OT(15 May 67)

3d Ind

SUBJECT: Operational Report-Lessons Learned for the Period Ending
30 April 1967 (RCS CSFOR-65), HQ 13th Cbt Ayn (Delta) Bn

HQ, US ARMY, PACIFIC, APO San Francisco 96558 1 JUL 1967

TO: Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D. C. 20310

This headquarters concurs in the basic report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:


G. R. KOBALY
OPT, AGC
Asst AG

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